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## Breaking the copy/paste cycle: the Stretchable Selection Tool

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This paper appears in: [User Interface Conference, 2000. AUIC 2000. First Australasian](#)  
Publication Date: 31 Jan.-3 Feb. 2000

On page(s): 3 - 10

Number of Pages: viii+149

Meeting Date: 01/31/2000 - 02/03/2000

Location: Canberra, ACT

INSPEC Accession Number:6483771

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1109/AUIC.2000.822057

Posted online: 2002-08-06 23:49:49.0

### Abstract

Copy-and-paste, or cut-and-paste, using a clipboard or paste buffer, has long been the principle facility provided to users for transferring data between and within GUI applications. We argue that this mechanism can be clumsy in circumstances where several pieces of information must be moved systematically—for example, extracting a predetermined set of data fields from a piece of unstructured text. In dealing with the plethora of potentially useful, but not appropriately structured, information on the World Wide Web, interfaces which facilitate manual information gathering are of considerable importance. We present an alternative, more natural user interface facility to make the task less onerous, and to provide improved visual feedback during the operation. We call our facility the “Stretchable Selection Tool”, a semi-transparent overlay augmenting the mouse pointer to automate paste operations and provide information to prompt the user. We describe a prototype implementation that functions in a collaborative software environment, allowing users to cooperate on multiple copy/paste operations

### Index Terms

Inspec

#### Controlled Indexing

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#### Non-controlled Indexing

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[paste operations automation](#) [prototype implementation](#) [semi-transparent overlay](#)  
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Not Available

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